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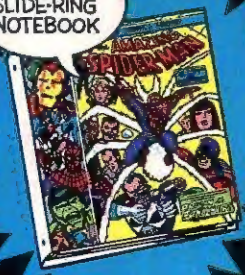

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THE DELAZNY STUDIO IN LOS ANGELES, 7:45 PM!
RRRRIPP
IT'S HERE... I KNOW IT'S HERE!
I'LL FIND IT, AND WHEN I DO--JUSTICE AT LAST IS MINE!
ONCE, THESE SOUND STAGES ECHOED WITH THE VOICES OF GARBO, GABLE AND BOGART... NOW, THEY RING WITH THE HUM OF GRINDING BLADES AND THE HOWL OF TEARING METAL! ONE BY ONE, THE LOCKED DOORS FALL, AND THROUGH THEM STRIDES A MAN ARMORED IN STEEL...
WEAK MEN CALL HIM THE GLADIATOR --AND TONIGHT WE'LL SOON SEE WHY!

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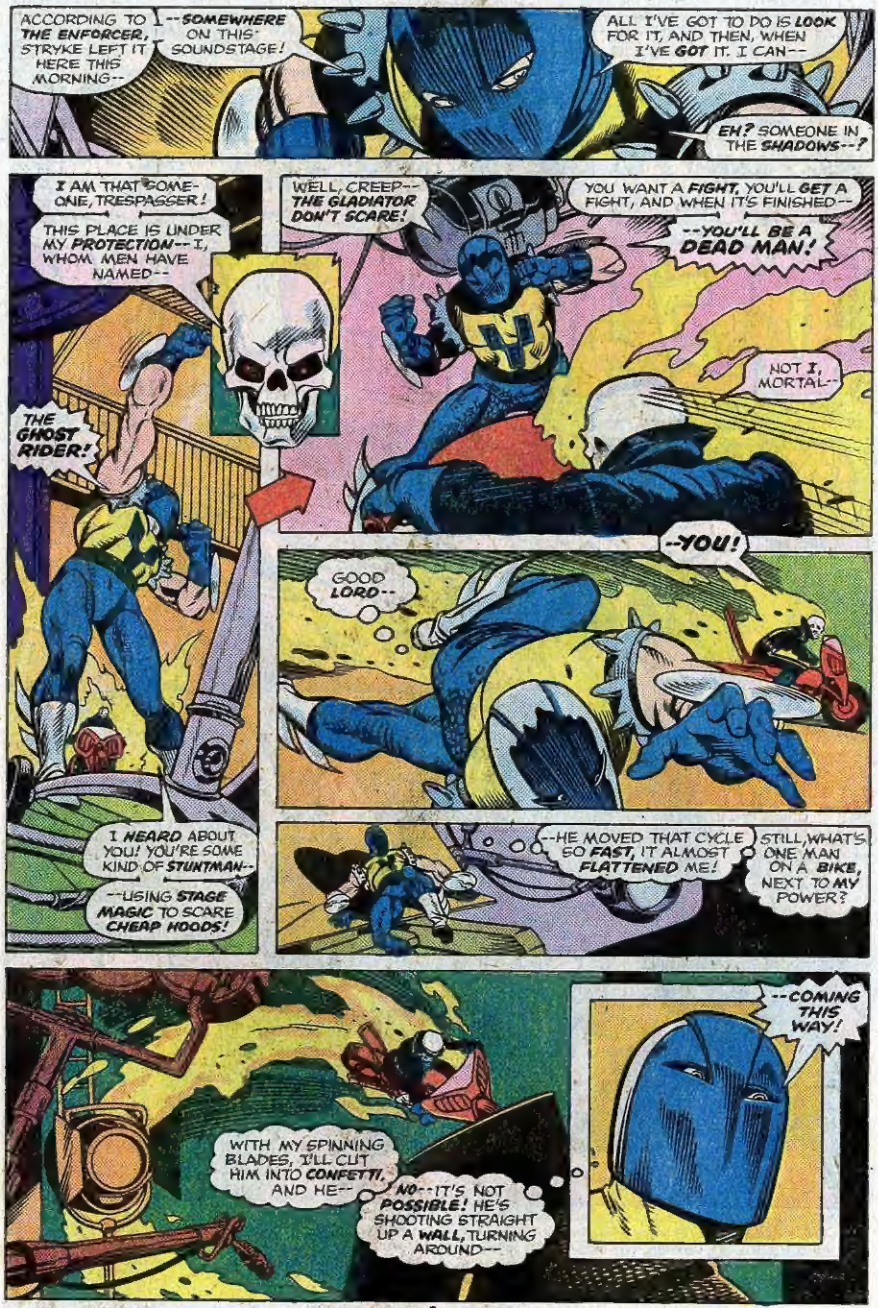
ACCORDING TO THE ENFORCER, STRYKE LEFT IT HERE THIS MORNING--
--SOMEWHERE ON THIS SOUNDSTAGE!
ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS LOOK FOR IT, AND THEN, WHEN I'VE GOT IT, I CAN--
EH? SOMEONE IN THE SHADOWS--?
I AM THAT SOME-ONE, TRESPASSER!
THIS PLACE IS UNDER MY PROTECTION-- I, WHOM MEN HAVE NAMED--
THE GHOST RIDER!
WELL, CREEP-- THE GLADIATOR DON'T SCARE!
YOU WANT A FIGHT, YOU'LL GET A FIGHT, AND WHEN IT'S FINISHED--
--YOU'LL BE A DEAD MAN!
NOT I, MORTAL--
--YOU!
GOOD LORD--
I HEARD ABOUT YOU! YOU'RE SOME KIND OF STUNTMAN--
--USING STAGE MAGIC TO SCARE CHEAP HOODS!
--HE MOVED THAT CYCLE SO FAST, IT ALMOST FLATTENED ME!
STILL, WHAT'S ONE MAN ON A BIKE, NEXT TO MY POWER?
WITH MY SPINNING BLADES, I'LL CUT HIM INTO CONFETTI, AND HE--
NO--IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! HE'S SHOOTING STRAIGHT UP A WALL, TURNING AROUND--
--COMING THIS WAY!



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VERY GOOD, INTRUDER! YOU HAVE LEARNED TO RESPECT MY SPEED--
--AND TO FEAR MY HELL-FLAME!
NOW THE BATTLE MAY BEGIN--
--IN EARNEST!
VAROOM
HE'S CRAZY-- ABSOLUTELY NUTS!
AND THE WAY HE'S TALKING--
--HE ALMOST HAS ME BELIEVING HE'S A GHOST!
HUH? HE'S COMING BACK ALREADY?
NOBODY CAN SPIN A CYCLE THAT QUICKLY--
--NOBODY HUMAN!
THEN--IT'S TRUE! THIS GUY'S A GHOST--
--AND THIS WHOLE DEADLY GAME'S FOR REAL!
VAROOM
HE'S TAUNTING ME WITH HIS EYES, DARING ME TO GIVE UP!
BUT I CAN'T GIVE UP! I HAVE TO GET WHAT I CAME HERE FOR --OR DIE TRYING!



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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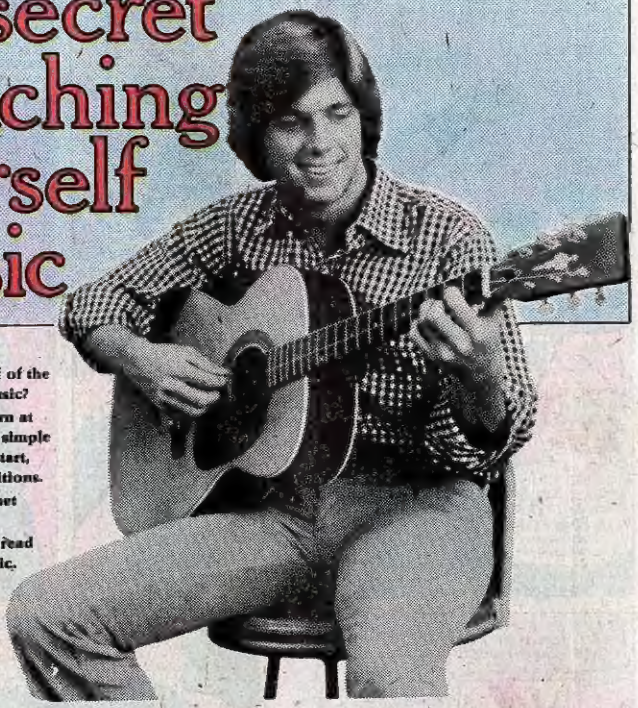

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THIS TIME, WHEN HE SPEEDS TOWARD ME, I'LL ONLY PRETEND TO SIDE-STEP--!
THEN, BEFORE HE CAN SWERVE --I'LL STRIKE!
WHIRR
WHAT'S WRONG, GHOST RIDER?
MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT MY BATTLES WITH DAREDEVIL AND IRON MAN--
THE GHOST RIDER KNOWS NO FEAR, HUMAN!
MY POWER COMES FROM SATAN--
MAYBE YOU'RE AFRAID!
--AND SATAN PROTECTS HIS OWN!
FEEL THE SEARING STING OF HELLFIRE, MORTAL MAN--!
KNOW THE TRUE MEANING OF TERROR!
WITH A GESTURE, GHOST RIDER RINGS THE GLADIATOR WITH FLAME, GOLDEN TONGUES LEAPING HIGH OVER CHARRING WOOD...
NOW, HUMAN--YOU WILL TELL ME THE REASON FOR YOUR COMING HERE!
YOU WILL EXPLAIN WHAT YOU SEEK--
--OR YOU WILL SUFFER THE TORTURES OF THE DAMNED!
LORD, OH LORD--I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY!
THE WALL BEHIND ME--IT FACES THE PARKING LOT!
SKRUNCH!
IF I CAN JUST CUT THROUGH--
CRASH!
WOOD CRUMBLING AROUND HIM, THE GLADIATOR LEAPS, AND IN AN INSTANT, IS LOST AMID THE DUSKY SHADOWS...



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AND, IN THE ROOM ABOVE, THE SINISTER SPECTRE OF THE GHOST RIDER SNORTS A NOT-SO SINISTER CURSE...
OF ALL THE DUMB-BRAIN BOZOS IN THE WORLD, JOHNNY BLAZE--
--YOU SURELY DO TAKE THE PRIZE.
LOOK AT THIS SET, BURNED PRACTICALLY TO A CINDER--
--AND WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SHOW FOR IT? NOTHING!
THE GLADIATOR ESCAPED, LEAVING YOU WITH A HELLFIRE-FORMED MOTORCYCLE YOU'VE GOT TO REABSORB--
--NOT TO MENTION A FAMILY-SIZED HEADACHE!
UHHH!: I CAN FEEL THE CHANGE STARTING!
THE DANGER IS PAST, SO THE GHOST RIDER IS DISAPPEAR-ING--
--LEAVING ONLY ME, THE BIKER'S ARNOLD STANG--
--THE KID COWBOY CALLED JOHNNY BLAZE!
FINE THING: I COME HERE TO PRACTICE A STUNT FOR NEXT WEEK'S TV SHOW, AND INSTEAD I END UP FIGHTING A BONA FIDE SUPER-VILLAIN--
--WITHOUT LEARNING WHY HE'S HERE, OR WHAT HE WANTS!
SPIDER-MAN, I AM NOT!
UH-OH. SOMEONE'S COMING.
HOW CAN I EVER EXPLAIN THIS MESS WITHOUT--
JOHNNY, IS THAT YOU?
IT'S ME, JOHNNY... KAREN!
JUST LIKE AN ACTRESS--FORGETTING HER FAVORITE DIRECTOR.
COOT COLLIER MAY BE ALL WASHED UP AS AN ACTOR, MISS PAGE--
--BUT I'M STILL YOUR MERRY MENTOR.
RIGHT, BLAZE?



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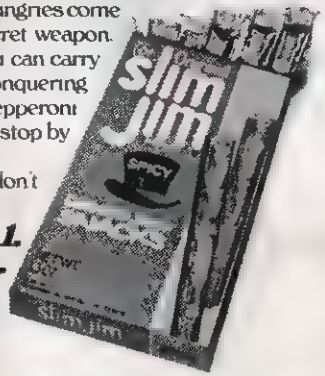


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SAY, UH, BLAZE... WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED HERE
--WHEN YOU WERE ON THE EAST COAST, DID YOU EVER HEAR OF A GUY CALLED--THE GLADIATOR?
OH, JOHNNY--DON'T TELL ME HE'S HERE IN LOS ANGELES!
THE WHO?
...AND THAT'S AN UNDER-STATEMENT!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, COOT!
HE'S A SUPER-VILLAIN,
APPARENTLY, HE WAS SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING HERE AT THE STUDIO, BUT--
CUT!
WE'VE GOT COMPANY, BLAZE--
ANYTHING YOU SAY, MR. COLLIER.
I HEARD THAT, YA LONG-HAIRED CREEP.
IF YOU'RE THE FIREBUG RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS WRECK, I'LL LOCK YOU UP PERSONALLY!
GET OFF MY BACK, ARMSTRONG!
THAT'S BECAUSE I KNOW A FREAK WHEN I SEE ONE
ALL I GOTTA SAY IS YOU BETTER BE READY WITH SOME FANCY EXPLAINING TOMORROW, OR ELSE--
...OR ELSE NOTHING!
THE ATMOSPHERE IN SOME AIR, THIS PLACE IS GETTING FOUL!



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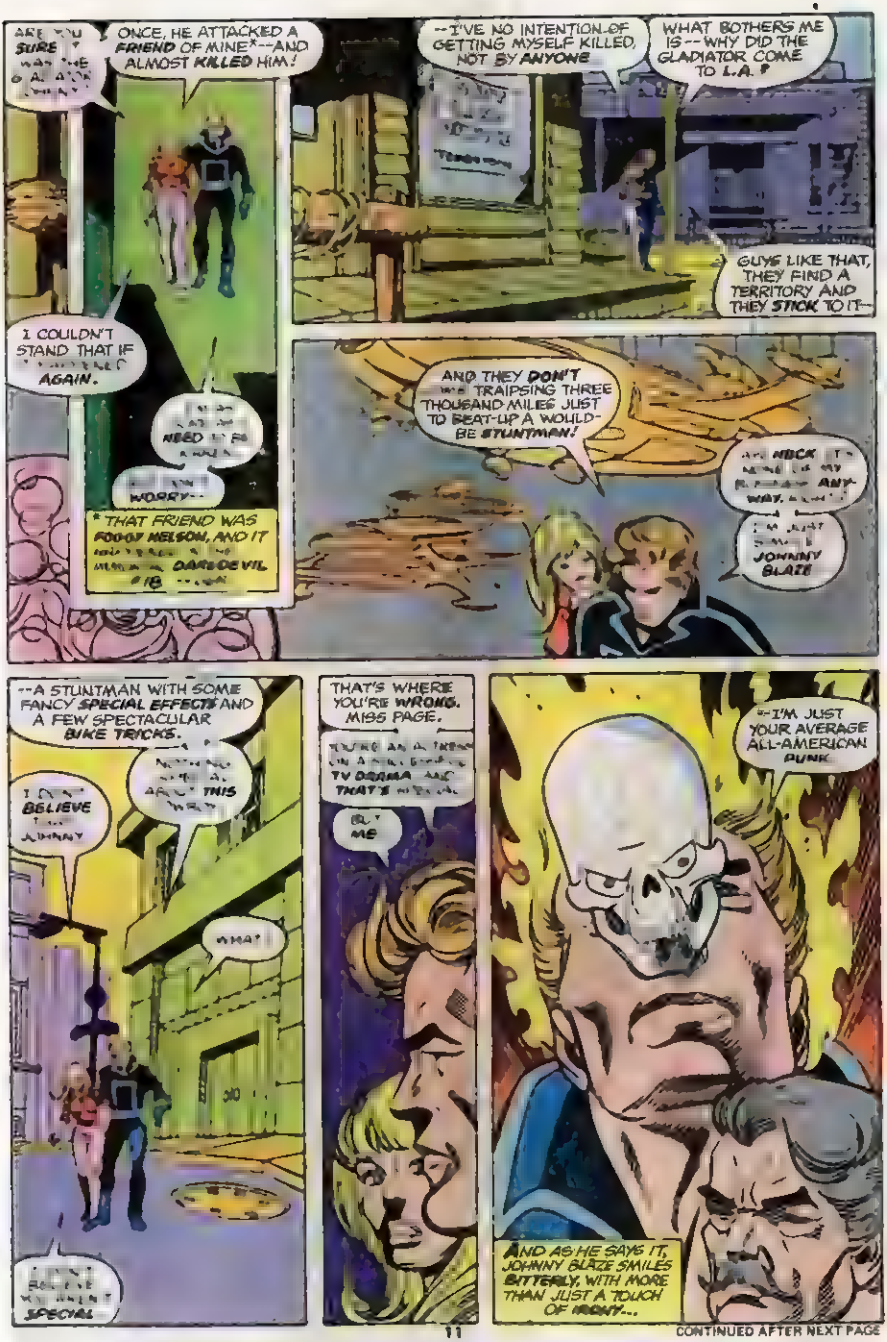
ARE YOU SURE
ONCE, HE ATTACKED A FRIEND OF MINE*--AND ALMOST KILLED HIM!
I COULDN'T STAND THAT IF
AGAIN.
WORRY--
* THAT FRIEND WAS FOGGY NELSON, AND IT
DAREDEVIL #18
--I'VE NO INTENTION OF GETTING MYSELF KILLED, NOT BY ANYONE
WHAT BOTHERS ME IS--WHY DID THE GLADIATOR COME TO L.A.?
GUYS LIKE THAT, THEY FIND A TERRITORY AND THEY STICK TO IT--
AND THEY DON'T TRAIPSING THREE THOUSAND MILES JUST TO BEAT-UP A WOULD-BE STUNTMAN!
ANY WAY.
JOHNNY BLAZE
--A STUNTMAN WITH SOME FANCY SPECIAL EFFECTS AND A FEW SPECTACULAR BIKE TRICKS.
I DON'T BELIEVE
JOHNNY
THIS
WHAT?
SPECIAL
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, MISS PAGE.
TV DRAMA
BUT ME
--I'M JUST YOUR AVERAGE ALL-AMERICAN PUNK.
AND AS HE SAYS IT, JOHNNY BLAZE SMILES BITTERLY, WITH MORE THAN JUST A TOUCH OF IRONY--



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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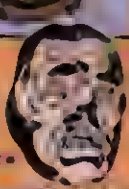

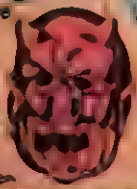

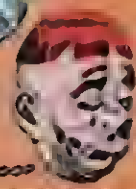

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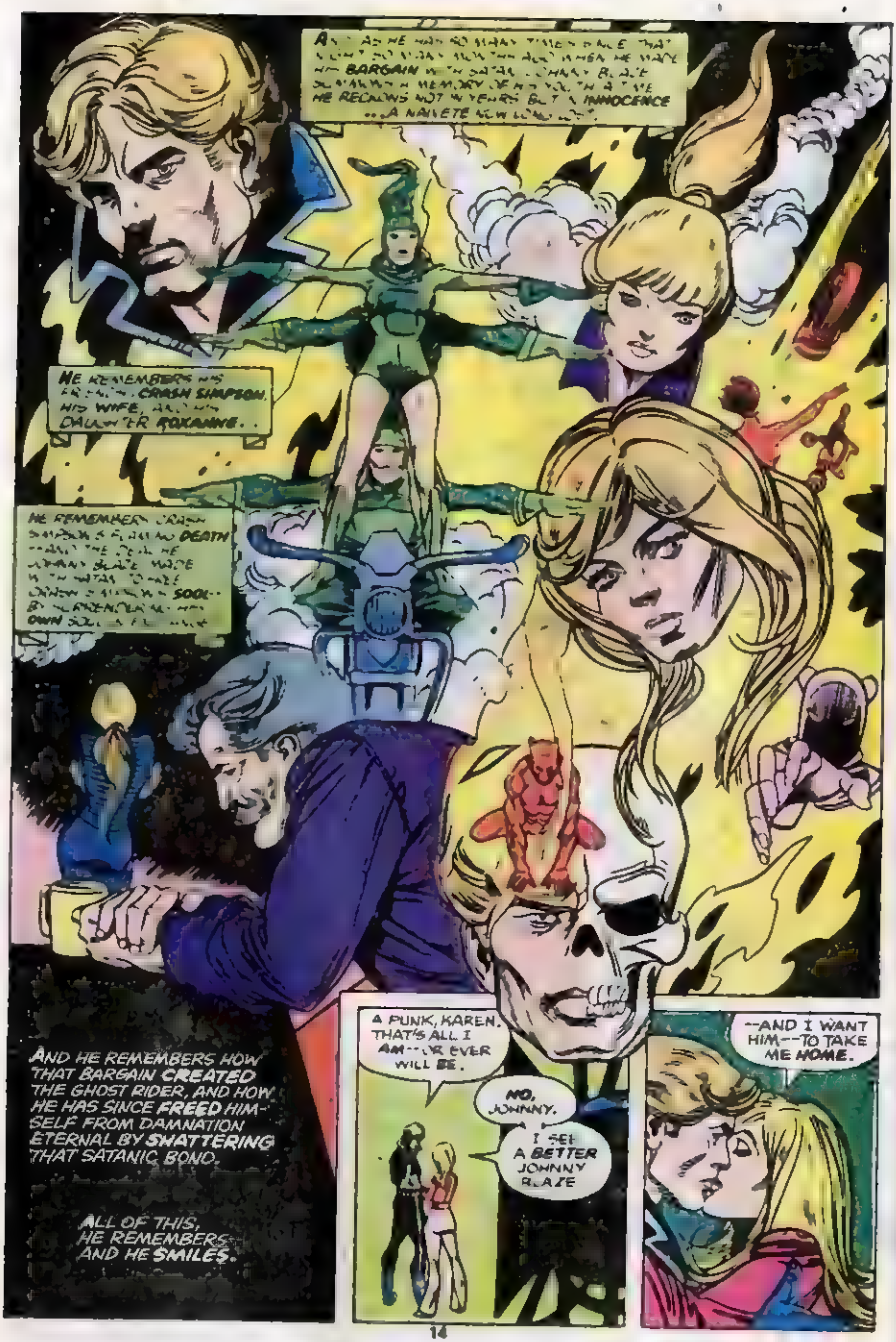
HE REMEMBERS HIS FAMILY. CRASH SIMPSON, HIS WIFE, AND THEIR DAUGHTER ROXANNE.
HE REMEMBERS CRASH SIMPSON'S FAMILY AS DEATH--AND THE DEVIL HE SOLD'S SOUL WORE IT'S FACE TO MAKE CRASH'S FAMILY SOON-- BY THE FRENZIED MEN OWN SOUL A FEW MINUTES
AND HE REMEMBERS HOW THAT BARGAIN CREATED THE GHOST RIDER, AND HOW HE HAS SINCE FREED HIMSELF FROM DAMNATION ETERNAL BY SHATTERING THAT SATANIC BOND.
ALL OF THIS, HE REMEMBERS. AND HE SMILES.
A PUNK, KAREN. THAT'S ALL I AM--OR EVER WILL BE.
NO, JOHNNY.
I SEE A BETTER JOHNNY BLAZE
--AND I WANT HIM--TO TAKE ME HOME.



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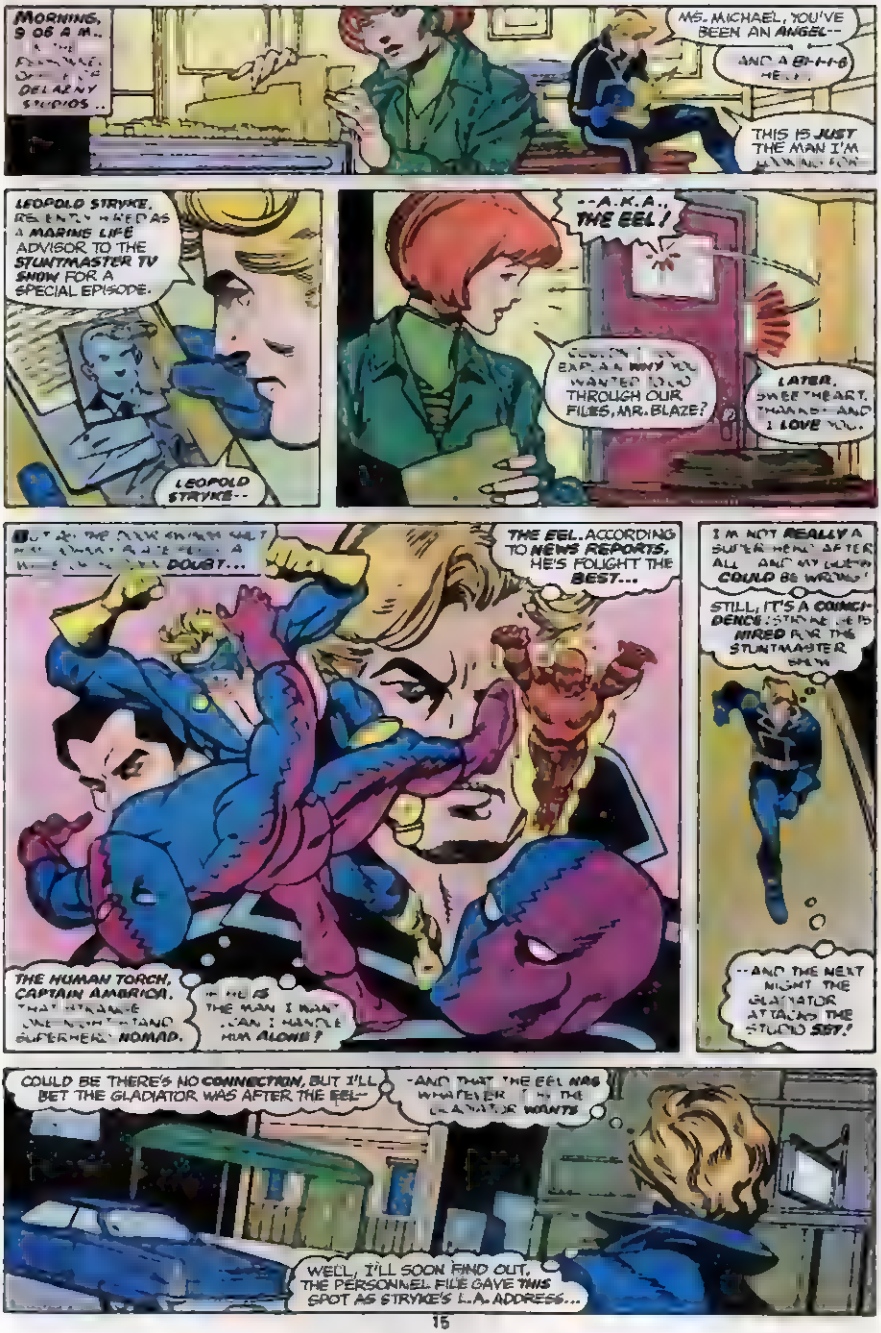
MORNING, 9:06 A.M.. AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF DELANY STUDIOS..
MS. MICHAEL, YOU'VE BEEN AN ANGEL--
AND A BI-I-I-G HELP!
THIS IS JUST THE MAN I'M LOOKING FOR.
LEOPOLD STRYKE, RECENTLY HIRED AS A MARINE LIFE ADVISOR TO THE STUNTMASTER TV SHOW FOR A SPECIAL EPISODE.
LEOPOLD STRYKE--
--A.K.A., THE EEL!
LATER, SWEETHEART. THANKS--AND I LOVE YOU.
BUT AS THE NEW SWORN MULTI-MILLIONAIRE SUPER-HERO FOR A WHILE, THERE'S NO DOUBT...
THE EEL, ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS, HE'S FOUGHT THE BEST...
THE HUMAN TORCH, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THAT STRANGE ONE-WITH-THE-LAND SUPERHERO, NOMAD.
--HE IS THE MAN I WANT. ..CAN I HANDLE HIM ALONE?
I'M NOT REALLY A SUPER-HERO AFTER ALL--AND MY LUCK COULD BE WRONG!
STILL, IT'S A COINCIDENCE: STRYKE JUST HIRED FOR THE STUNTMASTER SHOW.
--AND THE NEXT NIGHT THE GLADIATOR ATTACKS THE STUDIO SET!
COULD BE THERE'S NO CONNECTION, BUT I'LL BET THE GLADIATOR WAS AFTER THE EEL--
--AND THAT THE EEL HAS WHATEVER IT IS THE GLADIATOR WANTS
WELL, I'LL SOON FIND OUT. THE PERSONNEL FILE GAVE THIS SPOT AS STRYKE'S L.A. ADDRESS...



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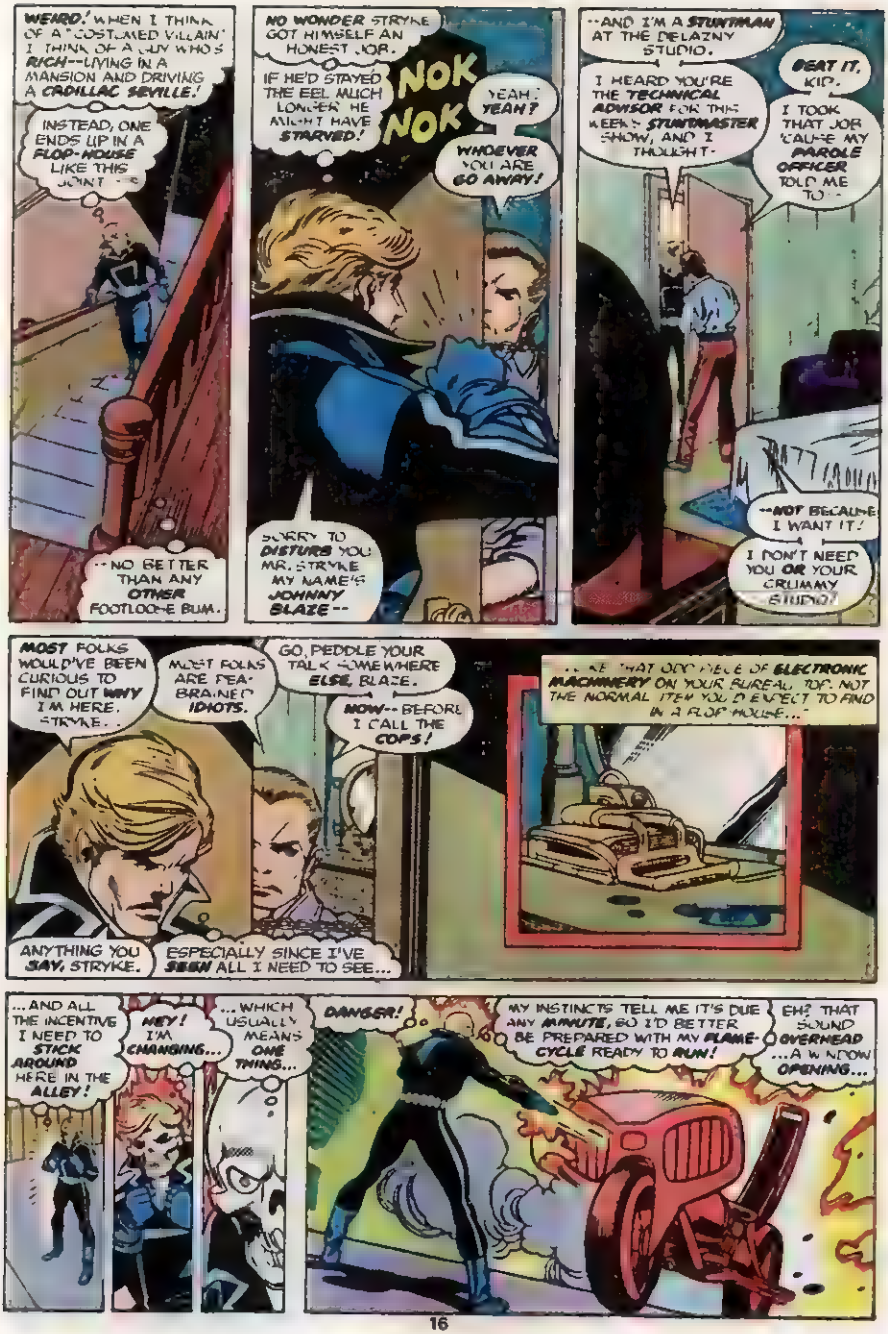
WEIRD! WHEN I THINK OF A "COSTUMED VILLAIN" I THINK OF A GUY WHO'S RICH--LIVING IN A MANSION AND DRIVING A CADILLAC SEVILLE!
INSTEAD, ONE ENDS UP IN A FLOP-HOUSE LIKE THIS JOINT--
--NO BETTER THAN ANY OTHER FOOTLOOSE BUM.
NO WONDER STRYKE GOT HIMSELF AN HONEST JOB.
IF HE'D STAYED THE EEL MUCH LONGER HE MIGHT HAVE STARVED!
NOK NOK
YEAH, YEAH?
WHOEVER YOU ARE GO AWAY!
SORRY TO DISTURB YOU MR. STRYKE MY NAME'S JOHNNY BLAZE--
--AND I'M A STUNTMAN AT THE DELAZNY STUDIO.
I HEARD YOU'RE THE TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR THIS WEEK'S STUNTMASTER SHOW, AND I THOUGHT-
BEAT IT, KID.
I TOOK THAT JOB 'CAUSE MY PAROLE OFFICER TOLD ME TO--
--NOT BECAUSE I WANT IT!
I DON'T NEED YOU OR YOUR CRUMMY STUDIO!
MOST FOLKS WOULD'VE BEEN CURIOUS TO FIND OUT WHY I'M HERE, STRYKE.
MOST FOLKS ARE PEA-BRAINED IDIOTS.
GO, PEDDLE YOUR TALK SOMEWHERE ELSE, BLAZE.
NOW-- BEFORE I CALL THE COPS!
...AND THAT ODD PIECE OF ELECTRONIC MACHINERY ON YOUR BUREAU, TOP. NOT THE NORMAL ITEM YOU'D EXPECT TO FIND IN A FLOP HOUSE...
ANYTHING YOU SAY, STRYKE.
ESPECIALLY SINCE I'VE SEEN ALL I NEED TO SEE...
...AND ALL THE INCENTIVE I NEED TO STICK AROUND HERE IN THE ALLEY!
HEY! I'M CHANGING...
...WHICH USUALLY MEANS ONE THING...
DANGER!
MY INSTINCTS TELL ME IT'S DUE ANY MINUTE, SO I'D BETTER BE PREPARED WITH MY FLAME-CYCLE READY TO RUN!
EH? THAT SOUND OVERHEAD ...A WINDOW OPENING...



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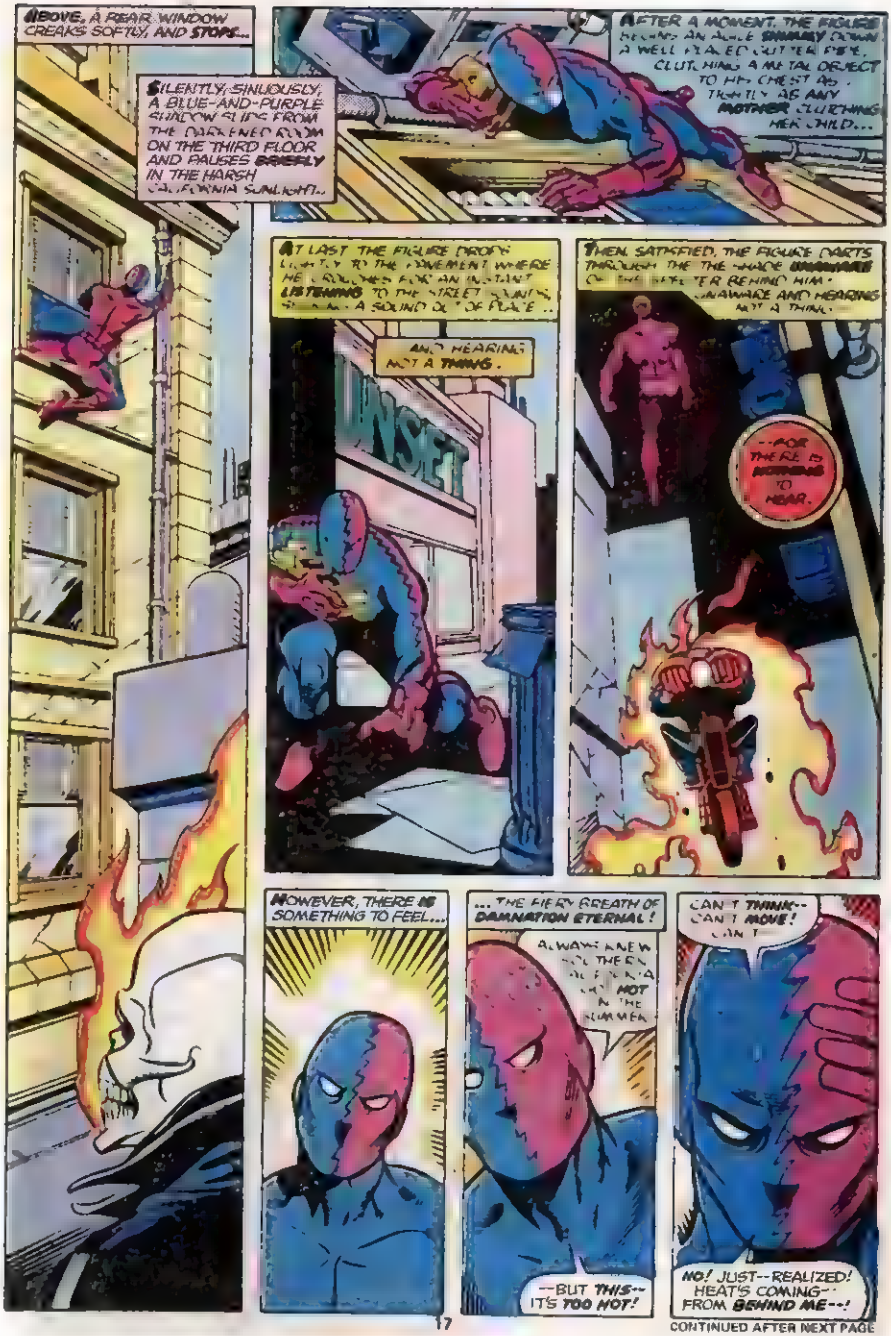
ABOVE, A REAR WINDOW CREAKS SOFTLY, AND STOPS...
SILENTLY, SINUOUSLY, A BLUE-AND-PURPLE SHADOW SLIDES FROM THE DARKENED ROOM ON THE THIRD FLOOR AND PAUSES BRIEFLY IN THE HARSH CALIFORNIA SUNLIGHT...
AFTER A MOMENT, THE FIGURE REMOVES AN ANKLE SHEATH AND A WELL-HONED KNIFE, CLUTCHING A METAL OBJECT TO HIS CHEST AS TIGHTLY AS ANY MOTHER CLUTCHING HER CHILD...
AT LAST THE FIGURE DROPS LIGHTLY TO THE PAVEMENT WHERE HE CROUCHES FOR AN INSTANT LISTENING TO THE STREET SOUNDS, SMELLING A SOUND OF PEACE...
AND HEARING NOT A THING.
THEN, SATISFIED, THE FIGURE DARTS THROUGH THE THE SHADE UNAWARE OF THE FIGHTER BEHIND HIM. UNAWARE AND HEARING NOT A THING.
--FOR THERE IS NOTHING TO HEAR.
HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING TO FEEL...
... THE FIERY BREATH OF DAMNATION ETERNAL!
ALWAYS KNEW HELL'S GONNA BE HOT IN THE SUMMER.
--BUT THIS-- IT'S TOO HOT!
CAN'T THINK-- CAN'T MOVE! CAN'T--
NO! JUST--REALIZED! HEAT'S COMING-- FROM BEHIND ME--!



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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# GHOST WRITERS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Hellfire Hicks,

GHOST RIDER is slowly but surely turning out to be Marvel's first religiously oriented comic book. The use of the Salvation Run and its definite similarities with the desert in which Satan tempted Christ was brilliant. Surely after issue #17 I was *expecting* something dazzling in the way of "the most dangerous motorcycle run of all!", but issue #18 took me totally by surprise. I hope that this multi-part saga affects everyone the way it's effecting me so that the mag will be made monthly.

Mark Dooley
106 Wehmier Street
Columbus, IN 47201

**Very interesting, Mark. We've had many readers write and tell us that GHOST RIDER has religious overtones, but the consensus among us "hicks" is that this mag—like all other Marvel comics—has *many* overtones that lean in a variety of directions. Sure, we can take credit for the stories and the artwork—but *not* the overtones. They're partly our subconscious and partly your imagination. You and all the other readers bring part of yourselves to our stories, and a lot of what you draw out of them is what you've put in. So, we thought this would be a good opportunity to *thank* you for all the input.**

Dear Tony, Frank & Marv,

I just picked up GHOST RIDER #18 at the newsstand. WOW! What a terrific comic book!

Frank, you've drawn many comics and you always adapt well to them, but you've done such a great job on GR that I hope you're here to stay. Your rendering of the Challenger (not to mention the ones of the Orb, Snake Dance, Miracle Man, Aquarius, the Trapster, the Thing, Angel, Iceman, Spider Man, Hercules, and the Black Widow) is fantastic. I especially enjoyed the full page spread on page 16, Frank—you really make it all work for me.

I'm glad Johnny finally got back his power to create a bike. I hope you have him keep it for a long time to come.

Greg Long
2607 Shenandoah Ave.
Durham, NC 27704

Dear Tony,

"The Salvation Run" in GHOST RIDER #18 is perhaps one of the best stories written so far this comic year. A very well-executed story indeed.

The Challenger is a stroke of pure genius; one of the most brilliant villains you've created. Please continue to use him to his full extent. The impact of the Challenger's appearance (page 6, panel 3) was too much!

Thanks for an issue worthy of the name Marvel.

Ron Cartwright
c/o 16823 Eureka
Paramount, CA 90723

**Well, folks, you might wonder why we've run these two letters back to back, especially since there's now a whole new team chronicling the adventures of our fiery-haired super-doer. The reason is quite simple. We received so much mail on issue #18—far more than we could possibly cover in last issue's letters page—we thought that printing a few more missives would be a good way to say farewell to the old era and hello to the new.**

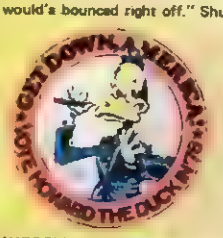
**As we mentioned last issue, it's Gallopin' Gerry Conway who is now writing and editing GHOST RIDER. However, the art chores have shifted once again, so it's good-bye to guest-artist Gil Kane, and hello to Dashing Don Heck who will be taking over as full-time artist next issue. Gerry and Don have some mind-boggling moments in store for you in their upcoming several-part extravaganza... like an honest to gosh clear definition of GR's powers! And we'll even begin to re-examine Johnny's relationships with Karen Page and 'Rocky Simpson! There'll be more villains, action, and subplots than ever before... guaranteed! And here's another guarantee: we'll see ya in sixty days!**

**NEXT ISSUE:** Ghost Rider struggles against the awesome powers of...THE ENFORCER, a totally new villain the likes of which you've never seen before! Don't miss this duel of the century as the latest, greatest new scourge of Marveldom battles against the flaming, fighting might of Ghost Rider—the most supernatural *super-hero* of all! (Who says this isn't the Marvel Age of Hyperbole? Not *us*, kemo sabe!)

**HTD WEAKLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE #2:**

---Unless you've dwelt in a cave for the past six months and have confined your reading strictly to rare, out-of-print editions of Lin Carter novels, you're probably aware that Marvel's feathered fury, HOWARD THE DUCK, has flung his battered hat into this year's presidential sweepstakes. This lemon-hued rectangle contains the second in our series of feeble reports on our wondrous waterfowl's winding woad to the White House.

---*TRAGEDY STRIKES DUCK CAMPAIGN;* Terre Haute, Ind. (UDI) Danger has become a constant companion to presidential hopefuls, and HTD is no exception. Last week, during the course of a single 30-minute address before the Society of Landlocked Seaweed Enthusiasts here in Terre Haute, *eleven* separate attempts were made to snuff the Duck. Weapons ranged from a letter-bomb skimmed through the air as a paper plane to an exploding cigar with a nuclear triggering device. Ten of these assassination attempts were abortive. The eleventh—involving a bottle of Crazy Glue, a box of Wheat Thins, and an expandable watchband—irreparably scarred one Milos Pitt, a member of the audience. Pitt, already confined to a wheelchair as a result of his participation in the Nixon campaign of '72, found himself directly in the line of fire and unable to dodge. He later commented bitterly, "Sure wish I'd been wearin' one o' them 'Git Down' buttons. Then the watchband would've bounced right off." Shucks!




---*KRASS KOMMERCIALISM KORNER:* Yes! you can still attach yourself or your clothing to the *Official HTD For President Button* pictured above. The price is $1.00 plus 25¢ postage and handling per button.

---*KRASS KOMMERCIALISM KORNER, Part Two:* If even the button is insufficient to express your fowl ardor, may we recommend our new HTD CAMPAIGN PORTRAIT, produced in association with Magic Mountain Books? Classier than a poster, it's reproduced in subtle sepia on heavy stock, suitable for framing. It, too, is just a buck, plus that inevitable 25¢ for postage and handling. And both the button and portrait are available from Howard's campaign manager:

STEVE GERBER
c/o Mad Genius Associates
850 Seventh Avenue, Rm. 806
New York, NY 10019

(Make all checks payable to Steve; he's still saving up for a copy of HTD #1.) Another report in seven days!

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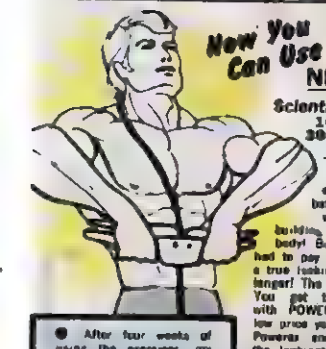

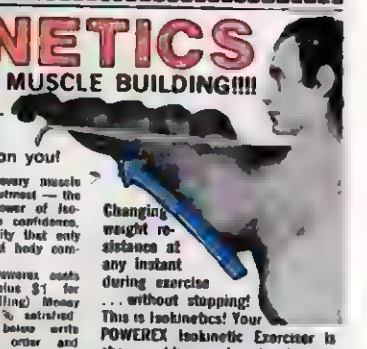

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INSTINCTIVELY, WITH THE SKILL OF THE SEA CREATURE HE EMULATES, THE EEL SLITHERS TO ONE SIDE--
-- AND THEN BEFORE THE GHOST RIDER CAN SO MUCH AS GAPE IN SURPRISE
--THE EEL KICKS OUT!
SLAKK!
SUDDENLY, WITH THE CLARITY OF SURGING PAIN, JOHNNY BLAZE UNDERSTANDS A DEADLY TRUTH:
LEOPOLD STRYKE IS INDEED AN EEL--
--AN ELECTRIC EEL!
DON'T KNOW WHO THAT GUY WAS--HOW HE MAKES THAT MASK BURN--OR WHY HE WAS FOLLOWING ME--
--AND JUST NOW, I DON'T CARE!
I'M LATE FOR AN APPOINTMENT--AND I'VE GOT TO MOVE!
CYCLE SKIDDING, JOHNNY BLAZE IS FLUNG HARD ACROSS THE NARROW ALLEY HIS BODY SCREAMING IN PAIN...
A WALL LOOMS UP, SEEMINGLY FROM NOWHERE, AND JOHNNY BLAZE SLAMS HARD AGAINST IT...
AFTER THE JARRING UNCONSCIOUSNESS.
HUMP!
THE GHOST RIDER BLACKS OUT!



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AND WHEN CONSUMING GHOST RIDER RETURNS...
BOY, WHAT AN AMATEUR I'VE TURNED OUT TO BE.
I HANDLED THAT FIGHT SO BAD, I MADE EVEL KNIEVEL JUMPING THE SNAKE RIVER LOOK GOOD!
SOMETHING TELLS ME I SHOULD GET UP AND GO HOME.
AND SOMETHING ELSE TELLS ME THAT WOULD BE AN EVEN BIGGER MISTAKE THAN THE ONES I'VE ALREADY MADE.
WHEN THE [illegible] LEFT THE STUDIO BEFORE HE SAW ME, HE MENTIONED SOMEONE NAMED THE ENFORCER...
MY BET IS THE ENFORCER HIRED THE GLADIATOR
--AND SENT HIM TO FIND THE EEL!
THAT'S IT!
OBVIOUSLY, THE EEL IS THE KEY TO EVERYTHING!
EITHER HIM OR THAT ELECTRONIC GIZMO HE WAS CARRYING.
IF I'M TO UNRAVEL THIS MYSTERY I'D BETTER FIND THE EEL AGAIN MYSELF, AS
UH-OH
GUESS I WON'T HAVE TO LOOK VERY FAR.
...AND HERE'S THE EEL, AND HE'S DEAD.
YOU CAN WHAT A WAY TO DIE--AT THE END OF YOUR LIFE IN A SERIES OF MOTELS AND JAIL CELLS--
ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR THAT ONE BIG SCORE!
JUDGING BY THE SLASH-MARKS ON HIS COSTUME, HE MUST'VE BEEN KILLED BY
EEEEE
YOU! THAT MAN--YOU KILLED HIM!
YOU'RE THE KILLER!
OH, NO...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE



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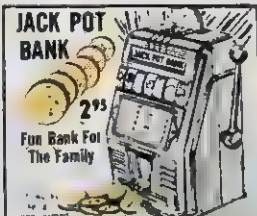

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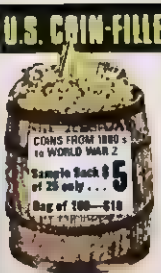


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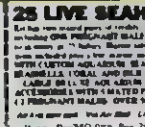

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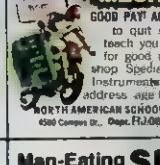

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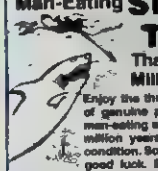

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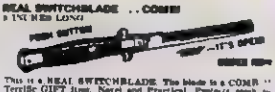


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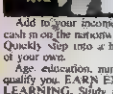

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JUST WHAT I NEED ... AN HYSTERICAL HALF-DEAD TEENAGE TELLING THE COPS I'M A MURDERER!
--AND JOHNNY BLAZE HAS GOT TROUBLE WITH A CAPITAL "T"!
ADD THAT TO THE FACT THAT MOST OF MY FRIENDS KNOW I'M THE GHOST RIDER!
SOMEDAY I'LL HAVE TO FIGURE A WAY OUT OF THIS DUAL IDENTITY THING ... AND CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT JOHNNY BLAZE AND THE RIDER AREN'T THE SAME GUY.
BUT RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT A MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, AND ONLY ONE WAY TO SOLVE IT!
I HAVE TO FIND THE REAL MURDERER
--BEFORE WORD ABOUT ME CAN SPREAD TO THE POLICE...
MOST COPS ARE CAUTIOUS, BUT THERE'S ALWAYS ONE HOT-HEADED BOOB WHO'LL TRY TO MAKE A REPUTATION FOR HIMSELF BY GUNNING DOWN THE MAN WHO KILLED THE EEL!
BUT, BEFORE JOHNNY CAN PURSUE THAT RATHER DUBIOUS LINE OF COWBOY LOGIC, HE TURNS A NARROW CORNER AT BREAKNECK SPEED--
AND RUNS HEAD-ON
THOOM!
THE GLADIATOR!



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YOU GUESSED IT, PUNK!
YOU SPOOKED ME ONCE WITH THAT FLAMING HEAD GAG--
BULL!
--BUT YOU WON'T SCARE ME AGAIN!
I'M WISE TO YOU NOW! YOU'RE AFTER THE SAME GIZMO I'VE BEEN TRYING TO STEAL--
--AND THAT'S TOO BAD FOR YOU!
THE EEL DIDN'T HAVE IT WHEN I SNUFFED HIM
--WHICH MEANS YOU DO! I SAW YOU OUTSIDE THE EEL'S HOTEL--AND I SAW YOU BACK AT THAT STUDIO!
YOU'RE THE ONLY GUY WHO COULD POSSIBLY--
MORTAL
--YOU ARE A FOOL!
KRAK!
I DO NOT POSSESS YOUR "GIZMO"--NOR DO I WANT IT!
YOU'RE STRONG, A-O--R,' YOU'RE ALSO A LIAR!
IF I HADN'T BEEN WEARIN' MY HELMET, YOU WOULD'VE BROKEN MY JAW
YEAH, YA'RE TOUGH, PAL
BUNT
--BUT I'M THE GLADIATOR!
NOW DIE! DIE!
SCRUNCH!
HUH?



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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# A TESTAMENT TO TAPESTRIES TEMPESTUOUS, TALES TITANIC, AND TABLEAUX TREASURED!

### STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Wow! I never thought we'd get so much mail about something that never even appeared in one of our comics! I'm referring, of course, to the avalanche of letters we've received about a certain commercial on television—the one in which I speak up for the Personna razor and blades—which has been all over the tube for the past few months. All of Marveldom Assembled has been bombarding me with the same question, "Why didn't I announce it in the Soapbox so you'd know when and where to see it?" The reason is—I couldn't! I thought it would only be shown for a week or two, and that by the time we could get a notice printed in our mags it would be over. Also, I never know in advance on which program it'll be shown—it seems to be all over the place. But here's a tip—they mostly use it on the major network sports shows. And here's the wildest part of all—remember the part at the end where I jokingly shout "Personna Man!"? Well, so many of you have gotten a charge out of that name that—you guessed it—we're thinking of creating a real Personna Man character! And wherever he has a narrow escape, we'll havta refer to it as a "close shave", right? Oh well, that's show biz! Can't write any more now; havta race to the nearest book shop and order a copy of the newest of our "Origins" titles, the big, colorful, third in the series, called BRING ON THE BAD GUYS! Sure, I'm the guy who wrote it, but you know what a nowhere memory I have—I can't wait to find out whether the good guys or the villains win! So, till Howard the Duck is sworn in as our next President, always remember—wherever you go, whomever you're with, whatever you do, the eyes of the world are upon you—so keep the faith, hang loose, and THINK MARVEL!

Excelsior!

Stan

**ITEM!** Two brand new blockbusters are headed your way this month and we're so excited about them, we just naturally have to make their announcement the very first tidbit we serve up! What do you do when a character is so popular that two monthly books featuring his adventures only leave most Marvelites screaming for more? Well, you don't do anything until you're one hundred percent certain that you have a writer/artist team available who can maintain the same high standards set on the two books already being published. Then—and *only* then—you come up with a *third* monthly title that deftly duplicates all the wonderment of the other two. The writer is GERRY CONWAY. The artists are SAL BUSCEMA and MIKE ESPOSITO. The book is called PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN. And if it is somewhat long on title, it's also just as long on the brand of action and thrills that have made Spidey the most popular comics character ever! But we said *two* blockbusters, right? For the second we have to look 25 years into the future...and to JACK "KING" KIRBY. Assisted by inker/letterer MIKE ROYER, the King has taken the cosmic concepts of the MGM—Stanley Kubrick movie classic, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, and turned them into an off-beat monthly series that's bound to leave you mind boggled and bedazzled. Yep. Our mammoth Treasury Edition adaptation of the film was only the start! In this all-new, all-original 30¢ comic, Jack expands upon what Kubrick and s-f author Arthur C. Clarke began and weaves a continuing saga that stretches from man's awakening on Earth all the way to his ultimate destiny in the stars. If you crave comics with a difference, this is it!

**ITEM!** Marvel's Mean Machine continues to roll along on the softball diamonds of Central Park, defeating Viking Press 8 to 7 and easing over Pocket Publishing '21 to 4. Will they keep it up? Will luck and skill continue to prevail? Will the rules committee finally question the presence of a seven feet tall, one thousand pound centerfielder who has green skin and purple pants? Tune in next month, sport fans.

**ITEM!** As the previous item may clue you, this is being written in the summer, mid-June to be precise. June is traditionally the time of weddings, and, believe it or not, even a mixed-up bunch like the bullpen can sometimes be traditional. So, we have two couples getting married this month: "Humble HOWARD" BENDER, ace letterer of our boisterous British Dept., and his lady JONI REICH plus "Devil-May-Care DOUG" MOENCH and "Dazzling DEBRA" JAMES, long-time teammates already as writer and letterer of our WEREWOLF BY NIGHT book. Congratulations to four very nice folks, best wishes for the future to you all!

**ITEM!** Coming out at the end of this month from our Black and White dept. is MARVEL PREVIEW #8 which will feature the long promised adaptation of Philip Wylie's GLADIATOR, under the brand new title of MAN-GOD. The original 1930 novel virtually created the prototype for the modern-day super-hero, and for almost a year now, writer/editor ROY THOMAS has been struggling through various setbacks to finally get it produced in graphic story form. RICH BUCKLER began the artwork, TONY DEZUNIGA completed it; all that's lacking now is *your* stamp of approval. But once you check it out, we have a hunch *that* won't be long in coming!

**ITEM!** If getting ahead in life is your problem (it certainly is your blushing Bullpen's!) September may be just the month for you, because our 1977 Marvel Calendar goes on sale then. Think of the jump that gives you on *next* year! It also gives you dazzling full-color slices by JACK KIRBY, JOHN & SAL BUSCEMA, GEORGE PÉREZ, GENE COLAN, JOHN ROMITA, JOE SINNOTT and a host of other favorites, plus the wit, cogent comments and mind-teasing Marvel nostalgia quizzes of writer/editor ROY THOMAS. Pick up on it. With all the goodies we've got going in it, it's more than a calendar, it's a whole *event!*

**ITEM!** Welcome Wagon time again, good people. If you've been following our CAPT. MARVEL or GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY series (and surely no true believer will admit to *not* following them), then you've noticed the fine line work of two new inkers in the Bullpen. Say 'hi' to "Timorous TERRY" AUSTIN (of Cal) and "Bumptious BOB" WIACEK (who handles GUARDIANS). But don't stop there, because we're also way overdue in extending firm, dry handshakes to "Beaming BETH" BLECKLEY and "Mellow MARY ELLEN" BEVERIDGE, editorial assistants extraordinaire, and to "Nimble NAOMI" BASNER, amiable aid to Operations Vice President "Jolly SOLLY" BRODSKY and no small help as catcher on the bullpen softball team. Glad to have the bunch of ya!

Stan Lee Presents:

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JIM SHOOTER — Associate Editor
ROGER SLIFER, SCOTT EDELMAN, ROGER STERN — Assistant Editors
GERRY CONWAY, ROY THOMAS, LEN WEIN, MARV WOLFMAN — Consulting Editors
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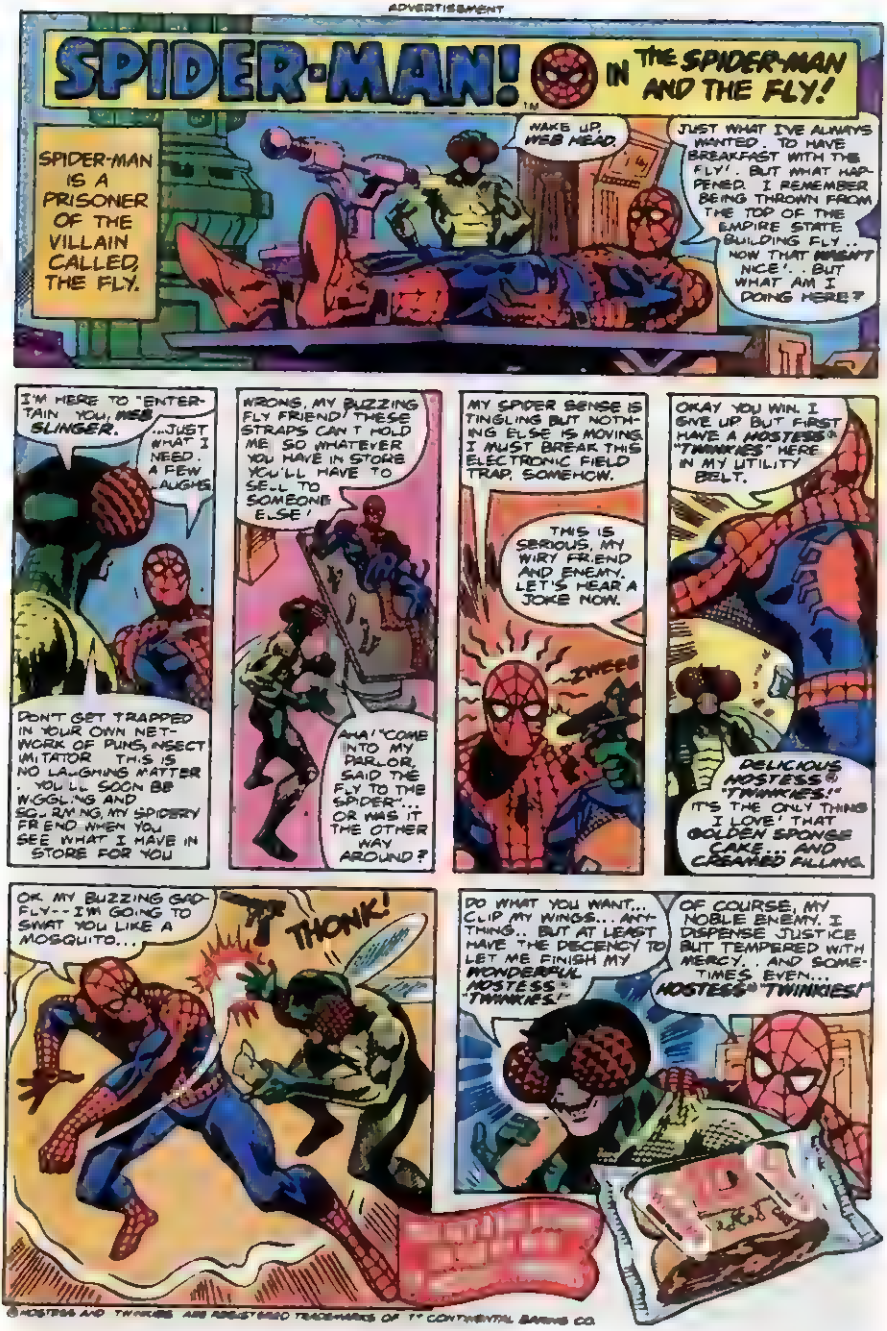
SPIDER-MAN! IN THE SPIDER-MAN AND THE FLY!
SPIDER-MAN IS A PRISONER OF THE VILLAIN CALLED THE FLY.
WAKE UP, WEB HEAD.
JUST WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED. TO HAVE BREAKFAST WITH THE FLY!. BUT WHAT HAPPENED. I REMEMBER BEING THROWN FROM THE TOP OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING FLY.. NOW THAT WASN'T NICE!. . BUT WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
I'M HERE TO "ENTERTAIN" YOU, WEB SLINGER.
..JUST WHAT I NEED. A FEW LAUGHS
DON'T GET TRAPPED IN YOUR OWN NETWORK OF PUNS, INSECT IMITATOR. THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER. YOU'LL SOON BE WIGGLING AND SQUIRMING, MY SPIDERY FRIEND WHEN YOU SEE WHAT I HAVE IN STORE FOR YOU
WRONG, MY BUZZING FLY FRIEND! THESE STRAPS CAN'T HOLD ME SO WHATEVER YOU HAVE IN STORE YOU'LL HAVE TO SELL TO SOMEONE ELSE!
AHA! "COME INTO MY PARLOR," SAID THE FLY TO THE SPIDER". OR WAS IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?
MY SPIDER SENSE IS TINGLING BUT NOTHING ELSE IS MOVING. I MUST BREAK THIS ELECTRONIC FIELD TRAP, SOMEHOW.
THIS IS SERIOUS, MY WIRY FRIEND AND ENEMY. LET'S HEAR A JOKE NOW.
ZWEEP
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OK. MY BUZZING GADFLY--I'M GOING TO SWAT YOU LIKE A MOSQUITO...
THONK!
DO WHAT YOU WANT... CLIP MY WINGS... ANYTHING.. BUT AT LEAST HAVE THE DECENCY TO LET ME FINISH MY WONDERFUL HOSTESS® "TWINKIES."
OF COURSE, MY NOBLE ENEMY. I DISPENSE JUSTICE BUT TEMPERED WITH MERCY.. AND SOMETIMES EVEN... HOSTESS® "TWINKIES!"

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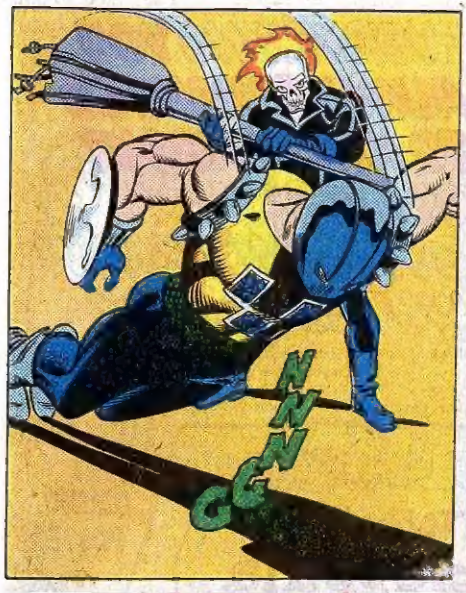
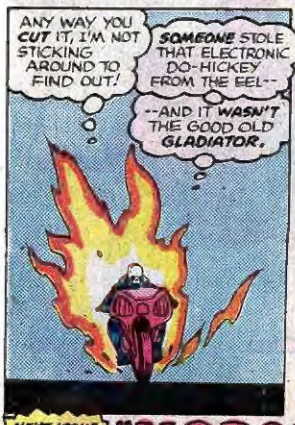


CHEST HEAVING, LUNGS CLUTCHING AT AIR, THE GHOST RIDER REMAINS MOTIONLESS, WHILE SIRENS GROW LOUDER IN THE DISTANCE; AND, WHEN THE POLICE FINALLY ARRIVE--
RREEEEE
-- AND JOHNNY'S MADE AS GOOD AN EXPLANATION AS HE'S ABLE--

-- HE DARTS DOWN YET ANOTHER ALLEY--
--FORMING HIS FLAME-CYCLE AT A RUN.
MAYBE THE COPS BELIEVE WHAT I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE GLADIATOR--
--AND MAYBE THEY KNOW THEY CAN FIND ME WHENEVER THEY WANT.


ANY WAY YOU CUT IT, I'M NOT STICKING AROUND TO FIND OUT!
SOMEONE STOLE THAT ELECTRONIC DO-HICKEY FROM THE EEL--
--AND IT WASN'T THE GOOD OLD GLADIATOR.

NEXT ISSUE: A STARTLING NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE GHOST RIDER'S CAREER! PLUS--

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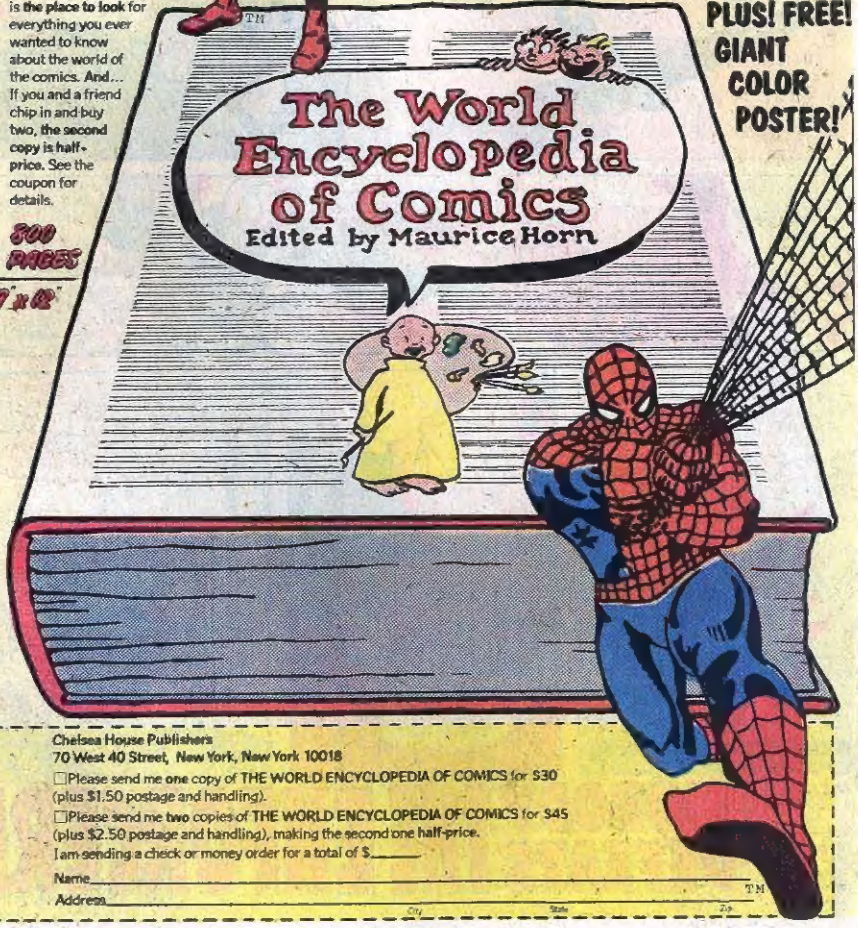


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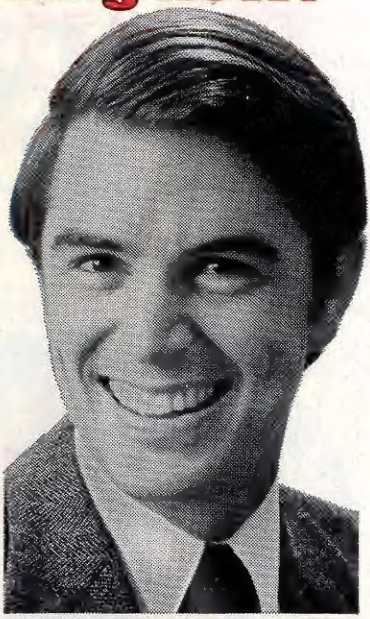

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